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DRAFT REPORT

Addendum

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PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

Programme 10. Environment

1. At its 27th and 28th meetings, on 20 June 1996, the Committee considered programme 10, Environment, of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

Discussion

2. Many delegations attached importance to the work of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and noted with satisfaction the proposed structure of the programme. Several delegations commended the introduction of performance indicators and encouraged their full utilization.

3. Several delegations emphasized the need for enhanced collaboration with other bodies and organizations of the United Nations system with a view to eliminating duplication. In that regard, some delegations called for greater efforts to be made to further strengthen coordination, with, among others, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development, the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the United Nations Children's Fund,

the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Maritime Organization and the World Trade Organization, regional commissions and conventions, particularly in the areas of freshwater, energy, capacity-building, trade, education, etc. in order to avoid duplication of work.

4. Some delegations expressed concern that, in view of the fact that water was a potential source of regional and international conflicts, the proposed plan did not reflect any initiative by way of early warning. Other delegations were of the view that such assumptions were speculative in nature and did not fall within the purview of programme 10. Concern was also expressed about the omission of reference to the regional seas programme and the protection of rivers and deltas. One delegation was of the view that the plan should avoid reference to specific and fragmented references to resources.

5. Some delegations felt that the problem of desertification and dry land degradation was not given adequate treatment. Some delegations called for attention to be given to threats caused by degradation of coastal areas. Some delegations underlined the difficult situation and the special needs and requirements of developing countries as a result of environmental degradation and emphasized the need for international support to deal with those problems through projects prepared and implemented by UNEP, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other relevant organizations. A number of delegations said that no special window existed in GEF for such projects. The discipline of the four focal areas of GEF should be maintained.

6. Some delegations stated that they attached importance to the transfer of environmentally sound technology and emphasized the need for greater efforts to be made in that regard.

7. One delegation called for efforts to be made to explore possibilities for the funding of environmentally sustainable development through resource allocation instead of the current dependence on the temporary mobilization of resources.

8. Some delegations considered that the dialogue on sustainable consumption and production patterns should also include developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

9. Some delegations underscored the importance of enhanced public awareness about environmental problems and concerns and emphasized the need for the involvement of civil society, particularly at the educational and family levels, in the protection of the environment.

10. Several delegations were of the view that the programme should also be focused on developing the international environmental law. Other delegations said such development was a function of Governments.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. The Committee recommended approval by the General Assembly of programme 10 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 with the following modifications:

(a) Paragraph 10.1: After "UNEP", insert the words "in coordination with other relevant United Nations agencies and international organizations, as appropriate,";

(b) Paragraph 10.4 (a): Replace the words "environmental threats" with the words "threats of environmental degradation";

(c) Paragraph 10.6: In the third sentence, delete the words "and may cause international conflicts over water rights";

[(d) Paragraph 10.7: After the words "Land-based Activities", insert the words "in the framework of the regional seas programme"];

(e) Paragraph 10.9:

(i) Delete the words "including transboundary ecosystems";

(ii) Before the words "strengthen the capacity of Governments" add the words "to work with UNDP to";

(f) Paragraph 10.11: Replace the last part of the paragraph after the word "Africa" with the following: "and assist in the preparation of projects in the area of land degradation";

(g) Paragraphs 10.14 and 10.23: Replace the words "countries in transition" and "transitional economy countries" with the words "countries with economies in transition";

(h) Paragraph 10.18: Replace the first part of the first sentence up to the words "human health" with the following:

"The use of chemicals is essential to protect public health and increase food production, but unregulated use of toxic chemicals or uncontrolled disposal of hazardous wastes threaten the environment and human health".

In the second sentence, before the words "monitor and assess global trends" insert the words "through the work of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal,";

(i) Paragraph 10.20:

(i) In the fourth sentence, delete the second part of the sentence, beginning with the words "as well as to derive";

(ii) Delete the final words of the paragraph "and to mitigate the effects of environmental change and emergencies". UNEP cannot do so by

itself. It can only support countries' efforts to do so under the Framework Convention on Climate Change. This idea is already covered in the final phrase in paragraph 10.15;

(j) Paragraph 10.24:

(i) In the second sentence, after the words "international and national laws have evolved", insert the words "to give expression to the policy decisions of Governments";

(ii) In the last sentence, replace the words "aiming at development" with the words "in support of sustainable development".